

Island Times

Look for Island Times the LAST Thursday of each month
AUGUST 2023

MONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES AND THE CENTER IN OAK HARBOR

Volume 7 • Issue 4



Healthy Aging Part 8: Physical Wellness

By Robin Bush ISR Communications

We all know the importance of eating well, exercising, avoiding smoking, reducing stress and sugar, avoiding processed foods, and not spending too much time sitting during the day. You might find the next time you visit your doctor, you are told to "Get outside every day." Healthcare providers recognize that a healthy lifestyle and prevention of chronic illnesses include going outdoors. Vermont has even adopted a "Park Prescription Program" where doctors can prescribe free entry into state parks to support this vital aspect of health. Maybe Washington State will follow suit.

Did you ever imagine how many ways you can benefit your health as you age by simply going outside every day? Getting outside can decrease obesity, diabetes, and hypertension and improve sleep, cardiovascular health, and immunity. There's even a nonprofit called Park RX America whose mission is to "decrease the burden of chronic disease, increase health and happiness, and foster environmental stewardship by prescribing nature during routine doctor visits." (Their website parkrxamerica.org under the "Patients" tab has a comprehensive list of the health benefits of being in nature and it is worth reading the list).

The EPA estimates that Americans spend an average of 80-90 percent of their time indoors. A study by Mathew White at the University of Exeter found people who spend two hours a week in nature had substantially better health than those who did not. "Two hours was a hard boundary," White says. "The effects on those who spent at least two hours in nature were robust, cutting across different occupations, ethnic groups, people from rich and poor areas, and people with chronic illnesses and disabilities."

Not everyone is able to spend two hours a week outside or walk 20 minutes each day. For those with mobility challenges, simply sitting under a tree will help to connect a person with nature and benefit physical and mental health. If you can't sit under a tree, spend time at an open window, deep breathing fresh air and natural smells, listening, and absorbing the visual scenery. These will still provide immune-boosting results. And, if you can, try placing a bird feeder by your window and spending time identifying the birds that visit the feeder.

PHYSICAL continued on page 8

Eaten Out of House and Home? Tips to beat inflation

By Liz Lange
Senior Services Administrator, City of Oak Harbor

How was one bag of groceries over \$50?! Some veggies, a couple fruit pieces, a dozen eggs, cheese, and meat. There are only three people in my household, no hungry teenagers, and yet here I am feeling like we are being eaten out of house and home! Over the last decade I have found myself averaging the cost of my groceries per bag when I leave the store. Just a "fun" thing I do. I have noticed that when I first started it was an average of \$20 per bag, just five years ago it was \$25 a bag, and now it seems to have skyrocketed to \$50 a bag. Of course, this is not an exact science, especially with trying to conserve bag usage, and using larger reusable bags, maybe I am just stuffing more into one bag. But no, there is proof of the inflation.

Given the ongoing pressures of inflation its no surprise. According to the Consumer Price Index, the cost of food again rose by double digits in January 2023: up more than 10 percent over a year ago. And it doesn't stop there. Its not just food. The same report shows, compared to January 2022:

Energy prices in general have risen nearly 9 percent.

Fuel oil and piped gas now cost 27.7 percent and 26.7 percent more, respectively.

Electricity is up 11.9 percent.

Housing costs have risen nearly 8 percent.

And, while the costs for medical care have increased less rapidly, they, too, are more expensive this year than last: three percent more since January 2022.

Its truly hard to see. These expenses can quickly spiral out of control even for the most budget-minded, meticulous older adults.

While Social Security benefits increased by 8.7 percent for 2023—a historic cost-of-living raise not seen in more

Kent evaluating his budget and finding savings to combat the impact of inflation



than 40 years—those extra dollars are "effectively already spent" before they show up in beneficiaries' pockets. Here is some great information compiled by the National Council on Aging to help.

How can older adults find relief from inflation and the right cost of living?

"One in four Americans who receive Social Security depend on it for 90 percent of their income," she said. "When the costs of housing, medical care, prescription drugs, and food rise, it becomes harder and harder for these older adults to make ends meet, through no fault of their own."

That's why the National Council on Aging (NCOA) is committed to helping you find and access crucial financial programs that help bridge the gap between income and daily living expenses. Every year, \$30 billion in these benefits go unclaimed—often because those who are eligible either don't know about them or are unsure how to apply. Many people mistakenly think they'd be taking money away from someone who needs it more. Fortunately, that isn't the case.

COSTS continued on page 3

DID YOU KNOW?

A Japanese study of 20,934 individuals, ages 65 and older showed laughter had a profound impact on health and well-being.

(Journal of Epidemiology, 2016)



Studies in Japan have reported that those who never laugh have a 21 percent higher prevalence of heart disease than those who laugh daily.

For more information, see page 6

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Daily Program Schedule

MONDAY

8:45 EnhanceFitness
9 Billiards
9 Quilting & Textiles
10 EnhanceFitness
(Low Impact)
10 Mah Jongg
11:45 Lunch (ISR)
12 Ping Pong
1 Art
2 Clogging

TUESDAY

8:45 Yoga
9 Billiards
9 Lapidary
10 Tai Chi
10 Walking Club
(Meets at Flintstone Park)
11 Tech Drop-In
11 Mexican Train
12:30 Line Dance
1 Knitting/Crocheting
6 Lapidary (By Appt.)

WEDNESDAY

8:45 EnhanceFitness
9 Billiards
9 Lapidary
10 EnhanceFitness
(Low Impact)
11 Duplicate Bridge
12 Ping Pong

THURSDAY

8:45 Yoga
9 Billiards
10 Tai Chi
10 Walking Club
(Meets at Flintstone Park)
10 Wii Bowling
10 Wire Wrap
1 Reader's Theater
1 Backgammon
2 Book Club
(3rd Thursday)

FRIDAY

8:45 EnhanceFitness
9 Billiards
9 Quilting & Textiles
10 EnhanceFitness
(Low Impact)
10:30 85 and Better Club
11:45 Lunch (ISR)
12 Pinochle
12:30 Line Dance
2:30 Ping Pong
7 Social Dance
(2nd Friday)

The Center In Oak Harbor

51 SE Jerome St., Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Front Desk: 360-279-4580

Passport services & photos
available by appointment

Current Business Hours:

Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 4 pm
Additional evening and weekend
classes and events as scheduled

Yearly Membership Dues: \$40

Available for anyone 50+ years

Liz Lange • 360-279-4581

Senior Services Administrator

Carly Larson • 360-279-4583

Program Coordinator

Christina Benjamin

360-279-4582

Program Assistant

Send comments and suggestions
to thecenter@oakharbor.org

CLASSES and EVENTS at The Center In Oak Harbor

FITNESS

Month: \$25 members, \$35 non-members
*(+3 day use fee for non-members)
Drop-in: \$5 members, \$7 non-members

EnhanceFitness

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

An hour-long evidence-based exercise
class that includes aerobics, strength
training, balance exercises and stretching.

EnhanceFitness Low Impact

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

10 – 11 a.m.

The low impact Enhance Fitness is very
similar to our S.A.I.L class and taught at a
modified pace with a chair for those who
need to regain strength and balance.

Yoga

Tuesday/Thursday | 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

A gentle yoga class taught by owner of
Lotus Tea Bar & Studio, Maria McGee.

Tai Chi (Video Only)

Tuesday & Thursdays | 10 – 11 a.m.

Tai Chi is a martial art using gentle, flow-
ing movements to improve the health of
the body and mind. In its most common
form in present day, it is known as moving
meditation that improves flexibility,
balance, strength, and mental focus as
well as decreasing stress. Tai Chi is a low
impact exercise – beneficial for every fit-
ness level and age. In this class you will
learn Tai Chi and Qigong forms and flows.

Free Fitness Classes

The Center is a Silver & Fit and Renew
Active facility which means if you qualify
for these programs through your insur-
ance provider you can participate in
Tai Chi, Yoga, and EnhanceFitness at no
cost. Please check with a staff member to
verify your eligibility.

CLASSES & PROGRAMS:

Resource Fair

Resources & Info for the 50+ Community

Wednesday, Sept. 20 | 10 AM-2 PM

Free and Everyone Welcome

Come chat with representatives from
companies and non-profits at the infor-
mational booths to learn about available
local resources to aid you in aging well
in Oak Harbor. Vendors typically include
vision, hearing, dental, living facilities,
medical alert, hospice, caregivers, trans-
portation, state and local assistive pro-
grams, financial institutions and more.
Information on programs & available
screenings coming soon.

Dance Lessons: Nightclub Two Step

Thursdays, Aug. 3, 17, 24 and 31

5:30-6:30 PM Lesson

6:30-7:30 PM Open Dance

\$20 members, \$35 all others (includes day
use fees) Fee is for the four-week class.

Come learn social ballroom nightclub
two step and then try out your steps in
the open dance hour. No partner needed.

Membership at The Center is
available for anyone over the
age of 50 and is \$40 a year.

History Class: Alaska

Thursdays, Sept. 14 - Nov. 16 | 1 PM

\$40 members, \$90 all others
(includes day use fees)

Instructor Debbie Wallin will guide you
through the history of Alaska, and what
a unique and interesting past it has.

Clogging

Mondays | 2-3 PM

\$20 members, \$30 (+\$3 day use fees) all
others

A type of dance practiced in the United
States, in which the dancer's footwear is
used by striking the heel, the toe, or both,
against a floor or each other to create
audible rhythms.

85 & Better

Fridays | 10:30 AM – 11:30 PM

Are you 85 and over or know someone
who is, come to our new group Fridays
that meets at The Center. They play
games, talks, and reminisce.

Book Club

3rd Thursday of the month | 2-3 PM

Join our book club led by Arletha Albright.
The book for August is *Killers of the Flower
Moon* by David Grann.

New! Backgammon

Thursdays | 1 PM

Looking for all backgammon enthusi-
asts and those interested in learning
the ancient, fascinating dice and board
game. No fee for Center members.



Sundays In-Person; 10 am
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Zoom service link online
unityofwhidbey.org

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The Center In Oak Harbor, 360-279-4580

COSTS continued from page 1

Here are some key money-saving programs that can help you or an older adult you know breathe a little easier each month.

SNAP: Get help paying for food

Once called Food Stamps, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a vital lifeline for individuals and families who otherwise might face hunger, malnutrition, and the stress of not being able to put enough food on the table. As the largest anti-hunger program in the United States, SNAP helps many older adults stretch their budgets by providing a monthly stipend they can use at participating grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other retail outlets that sell food. Each year, as many as 5 million older adults are missing out on \$6.3 billion in SNAP assistance alone.

LIHEAP: Get help paying for utilities

If you can't afford to heat or cool your living space, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can offer relief—whether you own or rent. This federally sponsored, needs-based program helps millions of households across the country pay for home energy bills, certain energy-related repairs, and even some weatherization projects. LIHEAP also provides emergency financial assistance if you're facing a shutoff.

Medicare Savings Programs: Get help paying for health care

Medicare isn't free, and out-of-pocket costs can add up quickly—especially for older adults who live with chronic conditions. That's where Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) come in. Sometimes called Medicare Buy-In Programs or Medicare Premium Payment Programs, these state-administered benefits are designed to ease the burden of certain expenses such as monthly premiums, deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance. Eligibility varies depending on where you live, as do the specific benefits available. That said, if you're enrolled in an MSP, you are automatically eligible for Extra Help (see below). Between 2-3 million older adults who are eligible for an MSP either don't know it or haven't applied, which leaves as much as \$5.9 billion on the table every year.

Extra Help: Get assistance paying for prescription drugs

On average, Medicare beneficiaries spend as much as \$500 of their own money each year on prescription medications. The Extra Help program, jointly administered by the Social Security

Administration (SSA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), subsidizes the cost of these drugs for older adults with limited income and assets. Additional benefits may also include zero premiums on Medicare Part D prescription plans and limited out-of-pocket costs at the pharmacy.

Beyond benefits: More help for managing your finances

Have you heard about NCOA's Budget CheckUp tool? Funded by Bank of America, this free online resource offers guidance on how to create a monthly budget, decrease expenses, and better manage your money. After you answer a brief anonymous quiz about your goals, Budget CheckUp provides a personalized plan of action.

The NCOA also offers a Benefits-CheckUp®. This free, online tool connects

millions of older adults with benefits programs that can help pay for health care, medicine, food, utilities, and more. Visit today to explore a variety savings opportunities for yourself, or for someone you know.

Have questions about BenefitsCheckUp? Call NCOA's helpline at 1-800-794-6559, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET.

SANDRA GJERSTAD: A Dedicated Front Desk Volunteer with a Passion for Community and the Great Outdoors

Meet Sandra Gjerstad, a remarkable front desk volunteer whose life journey has taken her from the vibrant city of Seattle to the close-knit community of Mount Vernon and eventually to the serene landscapes of Whidbey Island. With a deep love for nature and a heart full of compassion, Sandra's commitment to volunteering has touched multiple organizations and communities. Let's explore the inspiring story of this remarkable individual and her dedication to making a positive impact.

Born in Seattle, Sandra's family relocated to Mount Vernon when she was in the second grade. Growing up in this close-knit community, Sandra developed a strong sense of belonging and the importance of giving back. Her formative years were shaped by the values of community engagement, instilled by her surroundings and the people she encountered.

In 2005, Sandra's journey led her to Whidbey Island after she purchased property and built her dream house. Immersed in the island's natural beauty, Sandra found solace and a deep appreciation for the great outdoors. Hiking through scenic trails, fishing in tranquil waters, and camping beneath starlit skies became cherished activities that allowed her to reconnect with nature and find tranquility.

In 2009, Sandra and her family embarked on an adventure that took them to Arizona. However, the magnetic pull of Whidbey Island drew them back in 2021, as they realized the unique sense of community and the beauty of the island were irreplaceable. Returning to the place they now considered home, Sandra and her family eagerly embraced the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and engage in the community they held dear.

Sandra's commitment to volunteerism extends beyond her work at the front desk here at The Center. With her husband Scott and their three children—Karmin, Eric, and Phillip—by her side, Sandra has made giving back a family affair. Her uncle's role as the Legion Post Commander and her grandmother's connection to Oak Harbor have further deepened her ties to the community and sparked a desire to contribute in meaningful ways.



Sandra showing off our beautiful flower baskets outside The Center

Sandra's passion for volunteering knows no bounds. In addition to her front desk responsibilities, she actively volunteers at the American Legion, where she lends a helping hand in the kitchen and serves others with warmth and compassion. Furthermore, Sandra plans to extend her volunteer efforts to the Elks, where she hopes to contribute to their community initiatives. Her dedication to multiple organizations underscores her genuine desire to make a positive impact wherever she goes.

Sandra's love for the outdoors is an essential part of her life. Whether she's hiking through scenic trails, casting a fishing line into peaceful waters, or camping under the starry night sky, she finds solace and joy in the beauty of nature. Her enthusiasm for the great outdoors serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and appreciating the natural world around us.

Sandra's journey from Seattle to Mount Vernon, and finally to Whidbey Island, showcases her unwavering dedication to community and her passion for the great outdoors. As a front desk volunteer, she embodies the spirit of selflessness and kindness, touching the lives of those she interacts with. Sandra's commitment to volunteerism, her involvement in multiple organizations, and her love for nature inspire us all to make a positive impact in our communities and embrace the beauty that surrounds us. Her story is a testament to the power of individuals to create change and leave a lasting legacy of compassion and community spirit.



Sandra Gjerstad (Front Desk Volunteer) helping member Kathy MacNeill

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TRAVEL LOG

DAY TRIPS:

PIKE PLACE MARKET & WINGS OVER WASHINGTON

Thursday, Aug. 3 | 9 AM – 7 PM

\$130 Members, \$155 Non-members

Pike Place Market is Seattle's original farmers market and the center of locally sourced, artisan and specialty foods. Shop at the market, get a bite to eat, and take in the amazing sights and experience the smells of Washington with an aerial adventure in the "flying theater" Wings Over Washington. Price includes transportation and Wings Over Washington admission.

SAN JUAN ISLAND

Thursday, Aug. 10 | 7:30 AM – 8:30 PM

\$100 Members, \$120 Non-members

We will start the day with a scenic ferry ride out to San Juan Island. Once we arrive in Friday Harbor you will have

around two hours to shop the stores and grab a bite to eat. Then we will get back on the bus to head over to the western side of the Island and visit Lime Kiln Point State Park, one of the best places in the world to view Orcas from land. Before heading back to the ferry, we will stop at Roche Harbor to take in the views, do a little shopping, or visit the iconic chapel.

MOUNTAIN LOOP HIGHWAY

Wednesday, Aug. 16

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

\$96 Members, \$115 Non-Members

Join us for one of the most beautiful little drives in the state. We will head south through Arlington to Darington where we will visit the Oso Landslide Memorial and view the spectacular White Horse Mountain. Then, traverse the loop along the Sauk river through our beautiful cascade foothills, then down along the south fork of the Stillaguamish River, past Verlot and Gold Basin camping areas and many trail heads, to Granite Falls. You will get a chance to walk across the Jordan River pedestrian suspension bridge on our way to Arlington

for a late no-host lunch. After lunch and exploring Arlington, it will be back to Oak Harbor.



DIABLO LAKE TOUR & LUNCH

Thursday, Aug. 24 | 7:45 AM – 7 PM

\$160 Members, \$192 Non-members

As you cruise the glacier-fed Diablo Lake, you'll learn about the surrounding wildlife habitat and enjoy views of snow-clad mountain peaks, islands, and waterfalls. Experience parts of the lake that are hidden from view when traveling on the highway or trails. Your tour will come alive with stories about the early explorers and settlers in the area and the challenges of building the three Skagit River Hydroelectric Project dams and powerhouses in a very remote location. The Diablo Lake Boat tour ends with lunch from the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center. Tickets sell out fast, to reserve your spot, please register by July 21.

CHINESE GARDENS & SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE ARBORETUM

Tuesday, Aug. 29 | 8:30 AM – 5 PM

\$125 Members, \$150 Non-members

This outdoorsy day will start with a guided tour of the Seattle Chinese Gardens. After learning about the design and symbolic aspects of the Chinese Gardens we will head over to the South Seattle College arboretum and botanical garden to enjoy more beautiful displays and eat a freshly prepared boxed lunch.



TREEHOUSE POINT TOUR & GILLMAN VILLAGE

Friday, Sept. 8 | 9:30 AM – 6 PM

\$155 Members, \$185 Non-members

Treehouse Point is a woodsy resort that offers treehouse accommodations for their guests. These unique treehouses have been built by Pete Nelson from the TV show Treehouse Masters. The treehouses are only viewable by being an overnight guest or taking one of their guided tours where they will let us look in the unoccupied treehouses and show us around the property. After the tour, we will stop at Gillman Village for a no host lunch and shopping.

BRITISH PANTRY & TRADER JOE'S

Tuesday, Sept. 12 | 9 AM – 5 PM

\$95 Members, \$115 Non-members

The British Pantry is a full bakery, restaurant, and British imported food, gift store. They serve up some favorite British fare including potato crisps, fish and chips, sausage rolls, Lancashire pastries, bangers and mash, shepherds pie, and ploughmans. After a no-host lunch at the British Pantry there will be time to shop at Trader Joes, a grocery store offering unique food products at low prices.

MARINERS GAME

Wednesday, Sept. 13 | 9 AM – 7 PM

\$160 Members, \$192 Non-members

This is your chance to see the action in-person! Come cheer on the Mariners with us as they play the Angels. Price includes transportation, Terrace Club ticket, and buffet lunch.

COLUMBIA GORGE GETAWAY

Thursday, Sept. 14 - Friday, Sept. 15
7 AM (9/14) – 7:30 PM (9/15)

Rates coming soon.

Contact a staff member for rates.

Start the Columbia Gorge Getaway with a no-host brunch stop at Country Cousins in Centralia. Then we will venture on down I-5 to the border of WA and OR where we will head up Hwy 14 into the Columbia Gorge with our next stop being at Maryhill State Park and the Stonehenge Memorial, a full-size replica of the ancient, Neolithic structure in England. That evening we will arrive at Shilo Inn in the Dalles, OR where we will check into our hotel and enjoy a no-host dinner in their restaurant that serves up Northwest and Cajun favorites. That evening after the sun goes down, you will have the option of visiting the Golden-dale Observatory to take a look through their telescope to star gaze. The next morning enjoy breakfast at the hotel and then head down the Oregon side of the Gorge with a stop at Multnomah Falls. Lastly, we will stop for a no-host lunch before making the trek back home.

PORT ANGELES CRAB FESTIVAL

Friday, Oct. 6 | 7:45 AM – 8 PM

\$140 Members, \$168 Non-members

The Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival is the annual celebration of the region's diverse bounty – the seafood, the maritime and cultural traditions, and the breathtaking coastal environment. Included is a crab lunch accompanied by farm fresh corn on the cob and coleslaw.

EXTENDED TRAVEL:

SUNNY PORTUGAL

April 23 – May 2, 2024

\$3879 per person double

\$4479 per person single

Highlights include Portuguese Riviera, Lisboa, Belem, Obidos, Sintra, Arraiolos, Cork Factory, Evora, Winery Visit, Alentejo, Monsaraz, Lagos, Algarve, Faro, Tavira, four UNESCO World Heritage sites, Azeitao and 13 meals

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BRING A SIDE OR DESSERT TO SHARE.

Friday, August 4th | 12:00 PM
Windjammer Park West Kitchen Pavilion

REGISTER ONLINE, BY PHONE, OR AT THE CENTER
BEFORE TUESDAY, AUGUST 1ST.

ONE FREE REGISTRATION PER MEMBER.
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Quilting & Fiber Art Show

The Center in Oak Harbor
51 SE Jerome St. Oak Harbor

Saturday, September 23 | 10-4
Sunday, September 24 | 10-2

Free Admission | All Ages Welcome
Crafts For Sale | Raffle Tickets
PRESENTED BY THE OAK HARBOR SENIOR REES



Learn the Basics of Social Security

- How and when to apply for benefits
- Types of benefits you may qualify for
- Your Social Security rights
- Benefits based on earnings, spousal earnings (current and former)
- Survivor benefits for widow(er)s



This Island Senior Resources workshop will be presented via Zoom by Annette Barca who has been conducting pre-retirement seminars for 15 years. Free. Pre-registration required. For more information call 360-321-1600 ext 0.

Thursday, Sept. 14 • 1:30 p.m.

To pre-register, go to www.senior-resources.org/calendar and click on the date of the event.

Getting Ready For Medicare!

Going on Medicare? Want to know more?

Attend a free online "Getting Ready for Medicare" seminar offered by SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) volunteers. Questions answered following the event.

Seminar covers:

- "Basic" Medicare benefits, options for additional insurance(s)
- Medicare parts A and B
- The differences between "Medigap" (supplemental) insurance and Advantage plans
- Financial assistance for qualifying low-income individuals
- Prescription drug plans

ZOOM CLASSES

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 11 a.m.



IN-PERSON

Tuesday, Sept. 19, Noon
The Center in Oak Harbor (51 SE Jerome St.)

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2 p.m.
ISR Bayview 14594 SR 525, Langley

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

To register go to the calendar and click on the event (look for the event name in the calendar). Follow the registration information provided in the event description.

For more information or for help registering call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 or 360-387-6201 ext 0. You can also email reception@islandseniorservices.org.



AUGUST

Contributions to cover cost of meals are appreciated

WEEK 1		
Wed	2	Sesame Beef Broccoli w/Rice
Fri	4	Ham & Cheese Croissant
WEEK 2		
Mon	7	Cheeseburger Casserole
Wed	9	Tender Chicken Strips w/Honey Mustard
Fri	11	Taco Salad w/Ground Beef
WEEK 3		
Mon	14	Pulled Pork Sandwich on Bun
Wed	16	Chicken Divan w/Broccoli
Fri	18	Tuna Salad on Croissant
WEEK 4		
Mon	21	Philly Cheesesteak w/Peppers
Wed	23	Lasagna w/Ground Beef
Fri	25	Greek Salad w/Chicken
WEEK 5		
Mon	28	Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce
Wed	30	Pork Loin w/Apples

The Center in Oak Harbor and Island Senior Resources

If you have questions regarding senior activities at The Center in Oak Harbor, please contact 360-279-4580. Island Senior Resources does not administer or operate The Center in Oak Harbor.

For questions regarding programs and services to support seniors, adults with disabilities, and caregivers offered by Island Senior Resources throughout Whidbey and Camano islands, please contact at 360-321-1600.



TUESDAY, AUG 15TH
1 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Camano Island Library
848 N Sunrise Blvd,
Camano Island, WA

THURSDAY, AUG 17TH
1 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Freeland Library
5495 S Harbor Ave,
Freeland, WA

FRIDAY, AUG 18TH
1 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Oak Harbor Library
1000 SE Regatta Dr
Oak Harbor

(360) 321-1600 www.senior-resources.org https://www.facebook.com/islandseniors https://www.instagram.com/islandseniors/

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LEADERSHIP CORNER

The Café Model: a new approach to community support.

by **Katheryn Howell**, ISR Senior Director of Community Programs

There is a movement afoot called the Café. Unlike support groups, Cafés are topical conversations open to the broader community. I talked with Mel Watson, who has led programs and support groups for ISR for a decade, about ISR's online support groups and the introduction of Cafés at ISR.

Katheryn: You've led support programs for caregivers and receivers for almost a decade for ISR. How has or hasn't the pandemic changed the needs of these groups?

Mel: Support group participation increased by 400 percent during the pandemic. We moved all our support groups from in-person to online. I saw the benefits right away. Meeting virtually allowed people to see each other's faces and connect with their emotions. In a virtual room, it's a much different vibe; people become more vulnerable as we have the comforts of home around us, and we don't wear that outside mask. It takes a long time for someone to seek support, and when they can log in to participate in a group and see that there are people just like them, attendees seem to let go and trust that this group will be there for them. Participants prefer meeting virtually, and we offer hybrid for those who do not have a private

space at home (needed for sensitivity to the care receiver). Over time I have watched attendees connect and become friends. Now post COVID, group participants are meeting outside of support groups.

Katheryn: The Café approach is new. Can you explain the difference between a support group and a Café?

Mel: Support groups focus on supporting someone facing challenges, while Cafés allow for conversation around a topic that generates a free flow of ideas which helps each participant discover where their focus lies. The Café is an authentic and informal conversation that generates trust. Trust is vital for people to be able to connect because it opens space for vulnerability and conversation.

Katheryn: What are some advantages of the Café approach for ISR's Death Café, Pride Café, and soon, the Caregiver Café?

Mel: I see tremendous potential. Rather than waiting until a crisis hits an individual, we hope connections have been made much earlier through the Café approach. Also, Sno-Isle Libraries quickly partnered with ISR to provide space for the Cafés. With the library's reach to the broad public, we can try a few flavors of the Café to see where the interest lies.

I encourage our Island County community to look at our calendar of activities to see where there is a Café hosted in your neighborhood. <https://senior-resources.org/calendar/>.

Time for a Belly Laugh

By **Robin Bush** ISR Communications

Before you read further, laugh. Really laugh - at something or nothing at all. Chances are, you'll feel better after laughing. Laughter changes us. It helps us feel more positive; we engage more easily with others, and in short, we feel more "alive." You don't have to look far to find something to laugh at. Watch a bird take a bath in the rain gutter and laugh. Read a humorous book and laugh. Laugh with a friend on the phone. Laugh from your belly.

"You don't stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing."

— Michael Pritchard

Norman Cousins made the "laughing cure" famous in his book "Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient." He had inflammatory arthritis and found that laughing



heartily at Marx Brothers movies for 10 minutes daily brought him several hours of pain-free sleep and reduced his inflammation. Since then, research has uncovered the connection between laughter and reducing stress hormones and an increase in health-enhancing hormones and infection-fighting antibodies. Laughing improves blood flow to the heart, which induces relaxation and resistance to disease, improves mood and positive outlook, increases pain tolerance, and decreases depression, dementia, anxiety, and insomnia.

Studies in Japan have reported that those who never laugh have a 21 percent higher

prevalence of heart disease than those who laugh daily. And strokes can happen as much as 60 percent more in those who don't laugh daily. When you laugh, you increase your oxygen intake, stimulating your heart, lungs, and muscles, and the result can be a lowering of blood pressure. And stress, a significant contributor to susceptibility to disease, is released by laughter.

You can even benefit when others around you laugh. They say laughter is contagious, so when someone around you laughs, you'll likely laugh too. Try this - laugh like a 5-year-old. Most 5-year-olds will give long, hearty laughs at nearly anything. The world seems silly to them. As adults, we lose our spontaneous silliness, so we need to work on increasing our laughter quotient each day. Laughter, even if not stimulated by something you find funny - even laughing at nothing - is linked to chemical changes in the body that improve health.

Laughter also helps you connect more easily with others. We tend to be attracted to people who laugh, and you, in turn, are more approachable when you laugh. Laughter is one of the simplest ways to draw people together.

In their book "Humor, Seriously," Jennifer Aaker and Naomi Bagdonas describe one study that followed 50,000 people, and those with a sense of humor lived an average of eight years longer than those without. "When we laugh with someone - whether through a screen or 2m apart - we get this cocktail of hormones that strengthen our emotional bonds in a way that wouldn't otherwise be possible. Studies show it makes us more resilient, creative, and resourceful."

Laughter is a powerful tool in our health toolbox. It's fun, and it's free! No prescription is needed, and there are no negative side effects. Why would we ever overlook such a simple way to improve our health and happiness?

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Case Management
Medical Transportation/
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SHIBA

Senior Thrift

For more information, visit
www.senior-resources.org

OUR LOCATIONS

Weekdays, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Island Senior Resources (Bayview)
14594 SR 525, Langley, WA 98260

Island Senior Resources (Oak Harbor)
917 E Whidbey Ave
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

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Let Nature Bring You "Home"

By Robin Bush ISR Communications

"Home" connotes the deep and essential, the timeless and the natural.

The American Heritage Dictionary's definitions of "home" include not only the location where one lives but also an environment offering security and happiness, a valued place regarded as a refuge. It is further defined as "the place where something is discovered, founded, developed, or promoted;" it is "the source... the center... and the heart."

In our technologically advanced world, there is a profound need for authentic connection with each other and the natural world we share. The web of life teaches us we are all connected to every other living being and that every action creates reactions that circumnavigate the globe, yet in our daily lives, those connections are all too often compromised. In our dis-"connected" megabyte world, we long for a place where we feel at home.

We all have an innate connection to nature, called "biophilia," which is vital to maintaining physical and mental health. To support our need for natural connection, it is important to consider how bringing natural materials, patterns, light, and colors into our homes can help us feel more at home and to understand the benefits to our mental and physical health.

Think about some of what we know about nature:

- colors influence the behavior and relationships of plants and animals;
- changing light is the metronome for natural rhythms;
- theme and variation abound - forms repeat, not as duplicates, but as closely related entities;
- similarities of patterns at various scales exist universally - the same designs at the molecular level are repeated on a grand scale throughout the heavens, light years away;
- shapes and forms are flowing, avoiding straight lines, edges, and sharp angles (a response to the pressures of natural forces);
- plant and animal species that integrate best with the natural systems around them thrive.

When we walk into an interior that makes us feel "at home," we enter a space that uniquely inspires innovation, cultivates creativity, and universally forms connection.

Because we spend most of our time indoors, introducing natural elements of light, color, and sound into our surroundings can reduce stress and its adverse effects on health. This doesn't mean you need to re-design your home or spend a lot of money. Move your chair closer to the window so you get more light. Find a colorful throw at the thrift store and spread it across your couch. Display things you find on a walk and

touch them every day. Even photos or paintings of nature can help. Tell your friends that you'd appreciate the gift of indoor plants for your birthday or a holiday. Leafy greens improve air quality by increasing the oxygen level in a room. They regulate humidity and act as natural air purifiers. They actually create fresh air. Sound is an important aspect as well. You might add a small water fountain or play natural sound recordings of birds. Or, when the weather is pleasant, simply open your windows.

With just a few changes, you will feel more "at home" in your home if you



bring nature indoors. It's subtle, but when you do, you will find your home feels more restful, peaceful, and healing, and you will feel more connected to the natural world.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

BE INSPIRED

READ THE NEWEST ON OUR BLOG

- * Part Eight Healthy Aging: Physical Wellness
- * Let Nature Bring You Home
- * Leadership Corner: The Cafe Model
- * Time for a Belly Laugh
- * Sno Isle Library - Find a New Passion at the Library

senior-resources.org/resources

Introducing ISR's new Activity Hub

Looking for something fun to do? Check out our guide to nonprofit resources offering activities for older adults. There is so much to do in Island County, from gardening to theater, classes to hikes, lectures to recreation, and more! Check back regularly as we continue to add to this list. Go to: Activity Hub - Island Senior Resources (senior-resources.org)

2023 Senior Farmer's Market Produce Debit Cards are Here!

The Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a "Win-Win" program, which benefits both low-income seniors and our local farmers! Local farmers sell more produce and seniors who otherwise could not afford it are able to purchase organic, fresh fruits and vegetables as an excellent supplement to a healthy diet.

Eligible low-income seniors will receive a debit card worth \$80 to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers markets.

Who Is Eligible? (Must meet all three criteria):

1. Island County resident
2. Age : 60+ for non-Native Americans, 55+ for Native Americans
3. Income:
 - Up to \$2,248/ month for 1 person
 - Up to \$3,040/month for 2 people
 - For larger households, add \$792 per person.

How Do I Apply?

Applications are now being accepted. You can either go to our website www.senior-resources.org/nutrition/overview and apply online, or download and mail the application to us, or call (360) 321-1600 ext. "0" to get more details about how to pick up an

application. Debit Cards and funds are limited so please call soon.

We will be mailing out your debit card once we have all the necessary information. Debit cards are good through October, depending on the Farmer's Market seasonal time frame.

Participating markets

A list of participating authorized farmers markets and farm stores will be posted at www.senior-resources.org/nutrition/overview when available and a list will be included with the mailed debit cards.

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PHYSICAL continued from page 1

For those who have greater mobility:

- 10 minutes of gardening can alleviate depression.
- 20 minutes of hiking among trees or bird-watching reduces cortisol, the stress hormone.
- 30 minutes of walking in a park or watching your grandkids laugh on a playground can lower blood pressure and heart rate.
- 45 minutes of hiking in the mountains results in less fatigue and higher alertness than 45 minutes inside walking on a treadmill.
- 60 minutes spent interacting with nature can boost memory and attention span by 20 percent.*

*Source: Growing Bolder: Connecting with Nature

JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) Neurology reported that people could cut the risk of developing dementia by 50 percent by walking a target of 9,800 steps daily (walking with purpose, not sauntering). Their findings were based on

a study of nearly 80,000 people in the U.K. several years ago. They also found that higher-intensity walking for 30 minutes daily had a 62 percent lower risk. Long-term results are still being studied.

“Spending time immersed in nature does wonders to our brains. It encourages mindfulness which helps heighten our senses, and stimulates the brain, thereby improving our cognitive functions and combating anxiety and depression,” says Christine Kingsley, health and wellness director at the Lung Institute in Manchester, Connecticut. “Forest bathing helps boost immunity as it exposes one to a phytoncide-rich atmosphere, a compound released by trees, that triggers the increase of natural killer (NK) cells in the blood.” Kingsley continues, “Stronger immunity means that the body’s protective responses against harmful viruses, bacteria, and other foreign bodies are hyper-charged, helping keep infections and diseases at bay, specifically alleviating hypertension and reducing the risk of chronic heart failure.”

Don't miss our other articles this month: “Let Nature Bring You Home” and “Time for a Belly Laugh” (in this issue and on our blog) for additional ways to improve your physical wellness. Throughout August, we will also be posting about aspects of physical health on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/islandseniors.



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SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES

Find new a new passion at the library

What do you like to do in your spare time? Whether it's knitting, painting, gardening, woodworking, or even car tinkering, Sno-Isle Libraries offers a variety of opportunities and resources to connect with fellow hobbyists and add to your hobby toolbox.

ONLINE DATABASES PACKED WITH TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Access videos, articles, instructions, designs, patterns, and more with your library card. Explore free tools to spark your inspiration:

- ChiltonLibrary (new!): Get step-by-step repair procedures, troubleshooting guides, diagnostic trouble codes, photos, illustrations, diagrams, and videos for all kinds of auto repairs.
- Creativebug (new!): Access high-quality arts-and-crafts instructional videos for drawing, painting, sewing, knitting, crocheting, quilting, baking, and more, along with downloadable patterns, templates, and recipes.
- Gale OneFile: Gardening and Horticulture: Explore all things gardening, including soil management, propagation, watering, and pest management. Access more than 3.6 million articles from journals and reference books.
- Birds of the World: For birders and would-be birders, discover comprehensive life histories for all bird species and families.
- Ancestry Library Edition: Discover the world's largest online family history resource, home to billions of historical records and many helpful, time-saving tools.

HOBBY-BASED GATHERINGS

Check out our events calendar to learn more about these upcoming group activities that you could join:

- Board Game Night: Join Zo at Clinton

Hall for an evening of games. Try out the games provided, or bring your own!

- SilverKite Online Workshops: Learn new art forms from watercolors to dance to drawing! Sno-Isle Libraries partners with SilverKite Community Arts to offer a variety of free, online, intergenerational workshops.
 - The Wise Gardeners Book Group: Join fellow PNW gardeners! Dig into gardening themes with books inspired by nature and gardening on the 4th Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Clinton Community Hall.
- CRAFTING MEETUPS (ONLINE AND IN-PERSON)**
- Sno-Isle Libraries hosts a variety of get-togethers for crafters. Learn more and register on our events page:
- Online Craft & Chat: Share skills, learn about library resources and connect with fellow crafters at one of these online events. All craft and skill levels are welcome. Dates and times vary.
 - Crafters' Corner: No matter your craft of choice, join other local enthusiasts at the Coupeville Library on Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon.

ALL THE BOOKS

No matter what information you seek, there's a good book about it. Browse sno-isle.org for curated book lists on quilting, sewing, knitting, crocheting, woodworking, drawing, painting, jewelry design, and so much more. And don't forget! You can always ask a librarian for recommendations specific to your interests.

To learn more about how to pursue your favorite hobbies at the library, visit sno-isle.org or speak to a staff member at your local library.

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Publisher & Editor **Eric Marshall**
Marketing Representative **Noah Marshall**
Graphic Design **Teresa Besaw**
Production Manager **TJ Pierzchala**
Circulation Manager..... **Noah Marshall**

**Volume 7
Issue 4**

PHONE: 360-682-2341 FAX: 360-682-2344